

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2716

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, DM, ET
SUBJECT: BENIN VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO ADDIS ABABA PRO-
VIDES OCCASION FOR CRITICISM OF "INTER-AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE"

1. BENIN VICE PRESIDENT COL. BARTHELEMY OHOUENS ARRIVED
IN ADDIS ABABA JUNE 17 TO DELIVER AN UNSPECIFIED MESSAGE
FROM BENIN PRESIDENT KAREKOU TO CHAIRMAN MENGISTU. HE
WAS GREETED UPON HIS ARRIVAL BY SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE
PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNIL (OR DIRG),
INCLUDING MAJ. BERHANU BAYEH (PMAC-FOREIGN AFFAIRS) AND
CAPT. FIKRE SELASSIE WOGDERESS (PMAC SEC GEN), FOREIGN
MINISTER FELEKE, MINISTER OF INDUSTRY TESFAYE DINKA, OTHER
MINISTERS, PERMANENT SECRETARIES AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

2. THE JUNE 18 DINNER GIVEN BY PMAC SEC GEN FIKRE-SELASSIE
FOR VICE PRESIDENT OHOUENS PERMITTED BOTH PUBLICLY TO
ELABORATE ON THE PARALLELS BETWEEN THEIR MARXIST-
LENINIST SCIENTIFIC-SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS AND TO
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NOTE THAT IN IMPERIALISM AND REACTION THEY HAVE A
COMMON ENEMY.

3. FIKRE-SELASSIE USED THE DINNER OCCASION TO CRITICIZE
THE ALLEGED PLAN OF NATO COUNTRIES TO ESTABLISH AN INTER-
AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE IN ORDER TO HAMPER THE PROGRESSIVE
MOVEMENTS IN AFRICA. AT A SEPARATE MEETING, MENGISTU SAID

"IMPERIALISM SEEKS TO PROLONG ITS LIFE AND SYSTEM OF EXPLOITATION BY NIPPING IN THE BUD REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS ... AND ALSO ENDEAVORS TO DO THIS BY MEANS OF WEAKENING THE OAU."

4. OHOUENS SAID THAT REVOLUTIONARY BENIN HAD FACED THE SAME IMPERIALIST AGGRESSOR IN JANUARY 1977 AND SAID "MY PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT WILL STAND ON ETHIOPIA'S SIDE AT ALL TIMES FROM NOW ON. THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT MUST BE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY."

5. IN A JUNE 18 AMHARIC RADIO BROADCAST EDITORIAL FURTHER HARSH CRITICISM WAS MADE OF THE "AMERICAN SPONSORED NATO SO-CALLED INTER-AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE." THE THEMES OF THE CRITICISM WERE THAT AFRICA NEEDS MORE DEFENSE AGAINST THE NATO COUNTRIES, AS PAST AND PRESENT COLONIZERS AND EXPLOITERS, THAN IT DOES AGAINST THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS. THE MOTIVES FOR NATO INTERFERENCE IN AFRICA WERE SAID TO BE THE DEPENDENCE OF NATO COUNTRIES ON AFRICAN RAW MATERIALS. "AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY WAS EXPANDED ON THE BASIS OF CHEAP AFRICAN LABOR AND RAW MATERIALS." IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER AFRICAN RESOURCES, THE NATO COUNTRIES WERE SAID TO WANT TO KEEP AFRICA DIVIDED." "THE CONCEPT OF AN INTER-AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE WAS ORIGINALLY DR. NKRUMAH'S, BUT HIS CONCEPT WAS OPPOSED BY THE IMPERIALIST NATO COUNTRIES. NOW THESE COUNTRIES HAVE RESUSCITATED THE CONCEPT IN ORDER TO REMAIN

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MASTERS OF AFRICA." THE COMMENTARY CONCLUDED THAT AFRICA'S DEFENSE FORCE SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE OAU.

6. COMMENT: THE "INTER-AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE" APPEARS TO BE DRAWING INCREASING ATTENTION HERE ALONG THE PROPAGANDA LINES DESCRIBED ABOVE. OHOUENS' VISIT WAS BY NO MEANS THE FIRST CRITICISM, BUT IT CERTAINLY PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CONTINUING HARSH CRITICISM.
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